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ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
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FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7739  
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 000102

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/31/2017

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SUBJECT: OMANI MFA UNDER SECRETARY ON ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT  
AND YEMENI MEMBERSHIP IN GCC

Classified By: Ambassador Gary A. Grappo for Reasons 1.4 (b, d)

¶1. (C) Ministry of Foreign Affairs Under Secretary Sayyid Badr al Busaidi told the Ambassador on January 31 that the next Arab League Summit would be held in Riyadh in late March. According to Sayyid Badr, Saudi King Abdullah had insisted that the summit be held in Riyadh, rather than in Sharm al Sheikh or other proposed venue, to disprove fears held by some Arab officials that the Saudi capital was not sufficiently secure to host such an event. Sayyid Badr added that Saudi envoys would soon be delivering invitations to Arab League heads of state to attend the summit. (Comment: Given that King Abdullah visited Muscat on December 23, 2006, it is likely - though not certain - that Sultan Qaboos will reciprocate and travel to Riyadh for at least part of the AL Summit. End comment.)

¶2. (C) Sayyid Badr further informed the Ambassador that Saudi Arabia and Oman had recently established an informal study group to address questions pertaining to potential Yemeni membership in the GCC. He noted that King Abdullah had recently "come around" to at least consider the possibility of Yemen joining the GCC, but stressed that officials in both Riyadh and Muscat agreed that much work would be required before Yemen could be a serious candidate for GCC membership. The study group, Sayyid Badr elaborated, would likely come up with a list of actions that the Yemeni government would have to take to resolve concerns of GCC states on economic, political and security issues. The group will also examine the implications of Yemeni membership for Iraq and other states neighboring the GCC, he added.  
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